CLAIMS:

Subab 1. A method for adapting a multichannel video receiver to operate with a plurality of different point of deployment (POD) modules that provide conditional access to video programming, comprising:

5   determining a POD type for a POD module that is interfaced with said multichannel video receiver;

          determining interface parameters for said POD type determined; and

          adapting said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface parameters to said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

10   2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of determining a POD type comprises:

          prompting a user of said multichannel video receiver to determine and input the POD type for the POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver;

          receiving a user input command representative of the POD type; and

          determining the POD type based on said user input command.

15   3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said step of prompting a user of said multichannel video receiver to input the POD type comprises displaying an on-screen message on a video monitor associated with said multichannel video receiver, and

          said step of receiving a user input command representative of the POD type comprises receiving a wireless signal from a remote controller operable by the user and associated with

20   said multichannel video receiver.

          4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of determining a POD type comprises automatically detecting the POD type for the POD module interfaced with said multi channel video receiver.

          5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said step of automatically detecting the POD

25   type comprises automatically receiving a type message from said POD module when said POD module is interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of determining interface parameters for the POD type determined comprises obtaining said interface parameters from a memory file containing a list of POD types corresponding to said plurality of POD modules, and predetermined interface parameters associated with each POD type.

5   7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said interface parameter determined comprises a voltage level input required by said POD type, and said step of adapting said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface parameters to said POD module comprises providing said voltage level input to said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein said step of providing said voltage level input to said POD module comprises:

10   providing a programmable voltage regulator configured to input an unregulated voltage from said multichannel video receiver and to output a regulated voltage to said POD module; and

sending a control signal to said programmable voltage regulator, said control signal causing said programmable voltage regulator to output said voltage level input required by said POD type.

15   9. The method of Claim 7, wherein said interface parameter determined comprises pin positions of different interface signals required by said POD type, and said step of adapting said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface parameters to said POD module comprises providing said interface signals to pin positions of said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver, said pin positions of said POD module corresponding to said pin positions required by said POD type.

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10. The method of Claim 9, wherein said step of providing said interface signals to said pin positions of said POD module comprises:

25   providing a programmable switching unit configured route said interface signals between said multichannel video receiver said POD module; and

sending a control signal to said switching unit, said control signal causing said switching unit to route said interface signals to said pin positions of said POD module corresponding to said pin positions required by said POD type.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein said interface signals comprise a video in, a voltage in, and a ground in from said multichannel video receiver, and a video out from said POD module.

12. An apparatus for adapting a multichannel video receiver to operate with a plurality of different point of deployment (POD) modules that provide conditional access to video programming, comprising:

a memory having embedded therein data related to adapting said multichannel video receiver to operate with a plurality of different POD modules;

a processor configured to:

determine a POD type for a POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver, and to

determine interface parameters for said POD type determined; and

an adaptability circuit configured to adapt said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface parameters to said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

13. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said processor is configured to determine a POD type for a POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver by:

prompting a user of said multichannel video receiver to determine and input the POD type for the POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver;

receiving a user input command representative of the POD type; and

determining the POD type based on said user input command.

14. The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said processor is configured to prompt a user of said multichannel video receiver to input the POD type by causing an on-screen message to be displayed on a video monitor associated with said multichannel video receiver, and

to receive a user input command representative of the POD type by receiving a wireless signal from a remote controller operable by the user and associated with said multichannel video receiver.

15. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said processor is configured to determine a POD type by automatically detecting the POD type for the POD module interfaced with said multi channel video receiver.

16. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said processor is configured to automatically detect the POD type by automatically receiving a type message from said POD module when said POD module is interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

17. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said processor determines said interface parameters for the POD type determined by obtaining said interface parameters from a file embedded in said memory, said file including a list of POD types corresponding to said plurality of POD modules, and predetermined interface parameters associated with each POD type.

18. The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein said interface parameters determined comprise a voltage level input required by said POD type, and said adaptability circuit is configured to adapt said multichannel video receiver to provide said required voltage level input to said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

19. The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein said adaptability circuit comprises a programmable voltage regulator configured to input an unregulated voltage from said multichannel video receiver and to output a regulated voltage to said POD module; and
said processor is configured to send a control signal to said programmable voltage regulator, said control signal causing said programmable voltage regulator to output said voltage level input required by said POD type.

20. The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein said interface parameters determined comprise pin positions of different interface signals required by said POD type, and said

adaptability circuit is configured to adapt said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface signals to pin positions of said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver, said pin positions of said POD module corresponding to said pin positions required by said POD type.

5   21.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said adaptability circuit comprises a programmable switching unit configured route said interface signals between said multichannel video receiver and said POD module; and

said processor is configured to send a control signal to said switching unit, said control signal causing said switching unit to route said interface signals to said pin positions

10   of POD module corresponding to said pin positions required by said POD type.

22.   The apparatus of Claim 21, wherein said switching unit comprises an array of mechanical relays that are selectively opened or closed to route said interface signals to said pin position of said POD module in response to said control signal.

23.   The apparatus of Claim 21, wherein said switching unit comprises an array of

15   electrical switches that are selectively opened or closed to route said interface signals to said pin position of said POD module in response to said control signal.

24.   The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said interface signals comprise a video in, a voltage in, and a ground in from said multichannel video receiver, and a video out signal from said POD security module.

20   25.   The apparatus of Claim 12, further comprising an adaptability input/output portion configured to mate with and provide electrical contact with an input/output portion of said POD module when said POD module is interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.

26.   The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein said adaptability input/output portion comprises a cable connector configured to mate with a cable connected to each of said PODs

25   module.

27. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said input/output portion comprises a port configured to receive a smart card POD module.

28. An apparatus for adapting a multichannel video receiver to operate with a plurality of different point of deployment (POD) modules for providing conditional access to

5   video programming, comprising

means for determining a POD type for a POD module that is interfaced with said multichannel video receiver;

means for determining interface parameters for said POD type determined; and

means for adapting said multichannel video receiver to provide said interface

10   parameters to said POD module interfaced with said multichannel video receiver.